

Cedar River Instream Flow Commission

Final Minutes

SPU Water Quality Lab

November 7th, 2012

Organizations/Members Present:

- Seattle Public Utilities -- Tom Fox, Rand Little, Karl Burton
 - Seattle City Light – Liz Ablow
 - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife -- Peggy Miller
 - US Fish and Wildlife Service -- Tim Romanski
 - NOAA Fisheries --Randy McIntosh
 - Muckleshoot Indian Tribe -- Holly Coccoli
 - Army Corps of Engineers -- Lynne Melder and Larry Schick (by phone)
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- I. Call to Order:** Tom called the meeting to order at 9:40 AM.
- II. Approval of Agenda:** Approved as presented.
- III. Approval of Draft Minutes:** Lynne said there was a wording mistake in the Lake Washington/Locks section. The word “with” needed to be changed to the word “when”. Rand said he would make the change and finalize the October minutes.
- IV. News and Notes:** Holly reported that tree removal from the Cedar River floodwall in Renton was recently completed. Willows will be planted in the area of the tree removal and trees will be planted on the upper part of the levy as mitigation for the removal.
- V. Real Time Water Management:**

Hydrologic Conditions for Tolt and Cedar: The first half of October was dry but the second half of October was very wet bringing the monthly total to the 5th highest on record. Chester Morse Reservoir elevation has increased to approximately 1554’ with the recent wet weather. Recent releases and a dry weather pattern have allowed the reservoir to start coming down and Tom expects the elevation to be approximately 1551 by Monday, when a large rain event is forecasted. Flows were decreased last Thursday and Friday to allow for one more Chinook redd survey and to provide safe conditions for sockeye broodstock weir removal. Inflows are currently well above median levels and

the reservoir is higher than normal for this time of year. Tim asked why the weir wasn't pulled before the storm. Tom responded that the intensity of the storm was questionable and if the storm came in under forecast, the weir may have been able to continue fishing. As it turned out, the storm did produce substantial rain and flow releases were needed after the storm to recover the flood pocket. After the storm, as flows receded naturally, SPU decreased reservoir releases and increased diversion to bring flows in Renton down to levels that were conducive to remove the weir. Unregulated flows during the storm event would have reached approximately 2200 cfs but, because SPU captured the inflows to the reservoir, flows only reached slightly above 1,100 cfs at the Renton gage. Inflows to the reservoir are well above the threshold for high normal flows and all downramping requirements were met successfully since the last meeting. Consumption has been very close to last year's water use and cumulative diversion is also very close to last year. The SEAFM forecast indicates that we will not need to mobilize the pumping barges this year. The pump barges have been repaired to the point that staff can work to mobilize them if needed.

Lake Washington: The Corps is currently drafting the lake with a target elevation of 20' on December 1st. The salinity has dropped in the ship canal and the large locks are closed for annual maintenance. The summer temperatures in the ship canal were not as warm as some years but still warm enough to be stressful for migrating fish.

Fish Update: Karl reported that Chinook redd and carcass surveys were nearly complete and the total Chinook redd count was currently at 419. Chinook were unusually small this year indicating the cohort may have been dominated by 3 year old fish. Thirty-one Chinook redds were observed above Landsburg Dam but that is probably an underestimate because the last survey had to be skipped due to high water and safety concerns.

Weather: There are some rumors that the Stampede Pass weather station is moving to Snoqualmie Pass and Larry said he would find out if that was true and why the station will be moved. Larry said the short term forecast is calling for showers today with a drier pattern expected for the next 2 days and snow levels dropping to 2,000 to 3000 feet. Temperatures will be in the 40s and 50s in the lowlands. Sunday and Monday are forecasted for rain and the snow level will move up to 4000 feet but there is no threat of floods. The 2 week forecast calls for more wet weather with moderate to low snow levels. The ENSO indicates that this winter will be a weak El Nino or follow a neutral pattern.

- VI. Supplemental Studies:** Rand handed out draft scopes for the proposed peak flow topics including the goal for each topic, the objectives for each goal, the tasks to accomplish the objectives and a timeline for the tasks. The three topics include: 1) effects of peak flows on salmon redd scour, 2) effects of peak

flows on off-channel habitats, and 3) effects of peak flows on creation and maintenance of anastomosing channel characteristics. The IFC discussed the first two topics and decided to wait for more time at a future meeting to discuss the third topic. The scour study is designed to verify that the new scour threshold of 2200 cfs does not scour sockeye egg pockets. The shallowest USGS accelerometers were at 10 cm but there have been documented cases in the literature that indicate sockeye egg pockets can be as shallow as 5 cm. The IFC needs to decide what threshold it wants to use for the shallowest allowable scour level that will still protect the shallowest sockeye egg pockets in the Cedar River. The IFC discussed whether sampling Cedar River sockeye redds for egg pocket depths would provide a good basis for the allowable scour depth. No decision was made on how to proceed with this idea. Rand and Karl will be floating with Chris Magirl and Andy Gendaszek to identify places where sockeye consistently spawn to use as potential sites for accelerometer placement and will report back to the IFC in the next meeting to discuss and choose sites based on the survey information. After discussing the off channel scope, the IFC needs to define the term off channel habitat before moving forward.

All members present agreed to recommend reallocation of all remaining funding for the Accretion Flow Study to the Supplemental Study Program. Rand will check in with Buck to obtain his position on the issue. Rand will also check with Cyndy on the mechanism for implementing the transfer.

At the end of the meeting, Randy introduced the idea of having a joint meeting with the IFC and the Adaptive Management Work Group for the sockeye hatchery. One topic to discuss at the meeting would be managing flow increases in concert with sockeye fry releases in the river. Tom said he was open to such a discussion.

VII. December 5th IFC Meeting:

- 1) Discussion of Topics 1 and 2 in the Peak Flow AMP phase 2.

VIII. Meeting adjourned at 12:40 PM